

Message Text

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ACTION OES-07

INFO OCT-01 EA-12 ISO-00 FEA-01 AID-05 CEQ-01 CIAE-00
ERDA-07 COME-00 DODE-00 EB-08 EPA-04 INR-07 IO-14
L-03 NSF-02 NSC-05 NSAE-00 PM-05 USIA-15 SS-15
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FOR OES/ENP/EN

DEPT PASS CEO; EPA

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: SENV, JA
SUBJECT: HEALTH EFFECTS OF NITROGEN OXIDES

1. AN ENVIRONMENT AGENCY (EA) SURVEY HAS REVEALED THAT NITROGEN OXIDES (NOX) EMITTED FROM AUTOMOBILES HAVE NO CLEAR HEALTH EFFECTS ON PEOPLE LIVING NEAR HIGHWAYS. SURVEY SHOWED, HOWEVER, THAT TRAFFIC NOISE IS DEFINITELY RESPONSIBLE FOR LOWERING OF HEARING CAPACITY OF ROADSIDE RESIDENTS. ACCORDING TO EA, AN ESTIMATED 20 MILLION PEOPLE, OR ABOUT 20 PER CENT OF THE WHOLE POPULATION, LIVE NEAR HIGHWAYS. FINDING ON NOX HAS LED EA TO CONCLUSION THAT NOX CAN HARDLY BE REGARDED AS FACTOR IN POLLUTION DISEASE DESIGNATION UNDER POLLUTION HEALTH DAMAGE COMPENSATION LAW.

2. EA CONDUCTED SURVEY FROM OCTOBER TO DECEMBER IN 1975 TO STUDY INTERRELATIONS BETWEEN AUTOMOBILE POLLUTION AND HEALTH OF ROADSIDE RESIDENTS. USING EPIDEMIOLOGICAL METHOD DEvised BY BRITISH MEDICAL RESEARCH COMMISSION (BMRC), EA INTERVIEWED 792 HOUSEWIVES LIVING NEAR TOLL GATES
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OF TOMEI EXPRESSWAY IN KAWASAKI CITY AND 849 HOUSEWIVES LIVING IN AREA NEAR ROUTE 43 IN HYOGO PREFERCTURE. THEIR AGES RANGE FROM 30 TO 60. RESULTS INDICATED NO STATISTICAL LINKS BETWEEN AUTOMOBILE EMISSIONS AND RESPIRATORY TROUBLE SUCH AS SUSTAINED COUGH AND PHLEGM. IN HYOGO, SLIGHTLY MORE CCASES OF SUCH TROUBLE WERE FOUND AMONG HOUSEWIVES LIVING IN AREA (A) (WITHIN 50 METERS FROM

HIGHWAY) THAN AMONG THOSE LIVING IN AREA (B) (WITHIN 150 TO 200 METERS FROM HIGHWAY). DIFFERENCE WAS TOO SMALL TO BE CONSIDERED STATISTICALLY MEANINGFUL. NO SUCH DIFFERENCE WAS NOTED IN KAWASAKI.

3. SURVEY ON NOISE SHOWED THAT THERE WAS STATISTICALLY SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCE BETWEEN TWO AREAS; RESIDENTS IN AREA (A) SHOWED HIGHER LEVEL OF REDUCED HEARING THAN THOSE IN AREA (B). EA CLAIMS CORRELATION BETWEEN HEARING AND NOISE HAS BEEN EPIDEMIOLOGICALLY PROVEN FOR THE FIRST TIME IN THE WORLD. IT WAS ALSO FOUND THAT THERE ARE SOME INTERRELATIONS BETWEEN NOISE LEVELS AND EXTENT OF DISCOMFORT. AS RESULT OF SURVEY ON NOISE, EA PLANS TO MAKE RECOMMENDATIONS ON TRAFFIC NOISE ABATEMENT MEASURES TO MINISTRY OF CONSTRUCTION THIS FALL.

4. SURVEY ON HEALTH EFFECTS OF NOX HAS ELICITED SHARP REACTIONS FROM ROADSIDE RESIDENTS PARTICULARLY THOSE NEAR ROUTE 43 IN HYOGO NOW IN LITIGATION WITH STATE OVER AUTOMOBILE POLLUTION. LEADER OF GROUP SUPPORTING PLAINTIFFS CALLED EA SURVEY ARBITRARY AND ATTACKED EA FOR DISREGARDING RESIDENTS WHOSE HEALTH HAS ACTUALLY BEEN DAMAGED BY AUTOMOBILE POLLUTION. MICHIO HASHIMOTO, DIRECTOR-GENERAL OF EA'S AIR QUALITY BUREAU, IN AN INTERVIEW WITH NIHON KEIZAI SHIMBUN, SAID HE DOES NOT THINK HEALTH EFFECTS OF NOX ARE SERIOUS

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ENOUGH TO REQUIRE IMMEDIATE ACTION UNDER HEALTH DAMAGE COMPENSATION LAW, ALTHOUGH HE BELIEVES NOX IS MOST CLOSELY RELATED TO RESPIRATORY AILMENTS.

MANSFIELD

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NNN

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